CONFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

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Statement by A.N. Kosygin, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, at the Ceremony for the deposit of Instruments of Ratification of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

5 March 1970

Comrades,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are participating in an event of great international importance. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons enters into force today. Allow me, on behalf of the Soviet Government, to express deep gratification in this connexion.

Ever since nuclear weapons made their appearance, the policy of the Soviet Union has been invariably directed towards ridding mankind of the threat of nuclear war. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is an important step towards this objective, since it sets up a definite barrier to the further proliferation of such dangerous weapons of mass destruction as nuclear weapons.

Under the basic provisions of the Treaty, the nuclear-weapon States Parties to the Treaty undertake not to transfer such weapons to any recipient whatsoever, either directly or indirectly, and not to assist third parties in their manufacture or acquisition. Non-nuclear-weapon States, for their part, undertake not to manufacture or acquire such weapons.

This Treaty has met with wide international acceptance; it has been signed by almost 100 States. Now, with the Treaty's entry into force, the obligation to refrain from the proliferation of nuclear weapons becomes one of the most important standards of international law. Even those States which are not parties to the Treaty cannot fail to take this international standard into account. On them too lies the responsibility as to whether a limit will be set to the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The Soviet Union, as a Party to the Treaty, has no desire to obtain any unilateral advantages for itself. We are guided above all by the desire to ensure the security and peaceful life of the peoples, and also to save future generations from the

calamities of war. It is precisely for the sake of this lofty purpose that the Treaty must prevent the proliferation of lethal nuclear weapons in the world. At the same time, the benefits of the peaceful application of nuclear technology are to be made available for peaceful purposes to all States Parties to the Treaty.

The entry into force of the Non-Proliferation Treaty places serious problems before the Parties to it. This applies above all to the question of control. Control must be reliable and must be put into operation within the time-limits laid down by the Treaty.

As is well known, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons still does not eliminate the nuclear weapons themselves. For this reason it is very important at present that the nuclear Powers, and all other countries, should do everything possible to put an end to the nuclear arms race and to make progress in the cause of general and complete disarmament. The interest of a healthier international situation urgently call for this.

The Soviet Union and the other socialist countries deem it necessary to go further along this road and call upon all States to show their goodwill and readiness in practice to set about genuine disarmament. We for our part are making unremitting efforts, also within the Geneva Committee on Disarmament, to achieve agreement on the cessation of the arms race, in the first place the nuclear missile race, and on the elaboration of a treaty on general and complete disarmament. The representative of the Soviet Union in the Geneva Committee has instructions from the Soviet Government to strive for the earliest possible conclusion of an international convention on the prohibition of the development, production and stockpiling of chemical and bacteriological weapons and on the destruction of such weapons, and of a treaty on the prohibition of the emplacement of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction on the seabed and the ocean floor and in the subsoil thereof.

The Soviet Government attaches great importance to the dialogue with the United States which began at the end of last year on questions in regard to curbing the strategic arms race. We are now preparing with the utmost earnestness for negotiations on these questions which are to begin at Vienna in April of this year. The outcome of these negotiations depends, of course, on the goodwill of the two sides.

In conclusion, allow me to express the confidence that today's deposit of the instruments of ratification by the Soviet Union, the United States and other States, signifying the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, will serve as a good stimulus towards the Treaty's acquiring a general, genuinely universal character. This is an important and necessary treaty, which meets the interests of all States and all peoples.